Conservation

Published monthly for eight months in the year by the Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, Canada.

VOL. I | MAY, 1912 | No. 3

Burning Up Two Millions a Month

Fire Waste in Canada Mounting Higher and Higher—Measures Adopted by Other Countries to Reduce it

In the first four months of this year Canada burnt up $68,258 worth of property a day. Eight and a quarter million dollars is a pretty big sum of money to send up as a smoke offering to the god of fire in four months' time. Nevertheless, that is the extent of the offering we made.

Here are the fire losses in Canada month by month as given by the *Monetary Times*:

January	$4,002,650
February	1,640,153
March	2,261,414
April	1,355,055
Total, four months	$8,259,272

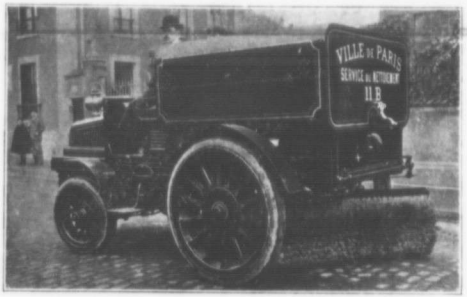
The worst feature about these losses is that they are increasing by leaps and bounds. The figures given above are nearly three million dollars greater than for the same four months of 1911—$2,897,397 to be exact.

How are we going to reduce these losses?—that is the important question. The greatest reduction in them would be accomplished by having every city and town revise its building by-laws from the standpoint of fire protection. The next step would be the appointment of officials—not mere functionaries—to rigidly enforce those by-laws.

Manitoba Leads

We Canadians, in the fullness of our prosperity, pay too little attention to this dead economic loss from fire. It is time that we gave it a thought. In the United States, many of the States have fire marshals that look into the cause of every fire, prosecute incendiaries, and order the pulling down of buildings that are a fire menace. They also keep a list of people who have had fires and few insurance companies there are who will insure the property of a man who has had fires of a suspicious origin. In Canada, the only Province having a fire marshal is Manitoba. It is worth while to remember that a really good fire marshal is a splendid investment for any province.

One cent per acre per year is insufficient fire insurance for an asset like the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve.



Motor-driven Street Sweepers in Paris

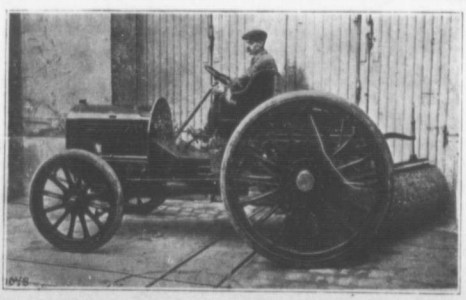
Dusty, dirty streets are a reproach to any city. At the same time it is undoubtedly a fact that there are few things that contribute more to the good reputation and general well-being of a city than clean streets. Street dust is an excellent medium for the transmittal of disease germs, especially of tuberculosis and other pulmonary complaints. These adhere readily to street dust and are quickly scattered by winds, or by coming in contact with the clothing of pedestrians. Consequently, in every well regulated city, efforts are made to lessen the dust nuisance.

The character of the pavement is a very important factor in cleanliness. Smooth pavements such as asphalt or brick are easiest to clean, but they also lend themselves most readily to the scattering of dust by wind. Wood blocks are commonly used for pavements in Europe, but rarely here.

One of the big troubles in Canadian cities is keeping the unpaved side streets clean. Such streets are frequently not even kept in good repair, and in dry weather clouds of dust from them drift into the main streets.

But even with good pavements a certain amount of street dust is inevitable and means must be adopted for its removal. This is usually accomplished by sweeping and by sprinkling or flushing. In most cities the sweeping is done by hand. Numerous experiments have, however, been made to ascertain the value of machine sweepers. The latter have proven to be of excellent service on smooth pavements, when used at night or at other times when traffic does not interfere. Generally the best of these machines are provided with a sprinkling apparatus so as to moisten the dust before sweeping. The flushing machines are apt to be destructive to pavements, and have the additional disadvantage of forcing silt into sewers, thus making necessary a frequent flushing of the latter.

The accompanying cuts illustrate types of street cleaning machinery that are being experimented with in Paris. These are driven by gasolene motors. They will be put through exhaustive tests during the coming summer, to determine their fitness for street cleaning. The photos have been kindly loaned by the *Commercial Motor* of London, England.



To Prevent Forest Fires Set by Railways

Recommendations of Conservation Commission Discussed at Meeting of Railway Commission

Coal burning locomotives in forest regions and the attendant costly forest fires; or oil burning locomotives and fewer fires;—which?

As announced in *Conservation* for March, the Commission of Conservation has been co-operating with the Board of Railway Commissioners in formulating regulations for the prevention of the starting of forest fires by locomotives.

A meeting of the Railway Commission to discuss suggested regulations was held in Ottawa on the 13th of May. Representatives of the railways, the Dominion Forestry Branch, the Commission of Conservation and the Government of British Columbia were present. At this meeting the regulations drafted by the Commission of Conservation were discussed. These may be summarized briefly as follows:

All previous orders of the Railway Board with respect to fires along lines of railway to be rescinded.

All coal burning locomotives to be fitted with specified netting spark arresters.

Locomotive ashpans to be specially constructed with a view to preventing the escape of live coals.

Railway companies to be required to provide locomotive inspectors at terminal and divisional points. These inspectors to examine weekly, the nettings and fire boxes of each of the locomotives running into such divisional points. The records kept by these inspectors to be available for the chief fire inspectors of the Railways and of the Commission.

The Railway Board to employ a Chief Fire Inspector for the Dominion who will be given wide powers in the matter of keeping railway rights-of-way free from inflammable materials and of requiring the construction of proper fire guards. He shall also prepare each year, a detailed statement for the railway companies setting forth the measures that they will be required to take to prevent fires. Such information must include details of—

(*a*) the number of men to be employed as fire patrols, their location and duties;

(*Continued on page 2*)